

SONGS AS METAPHOR FOR SOCIAL CRITICISM AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: THE SAMARU PROJECT FORMS

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Abstract

Social and infrastructural developments are basic necessities in every society as they impact healthy living. These are borne out of human creativity and innovation. This study expounds the potency of songs as metaphor for social criticism towards community development. It focuses on the songs created and used as well as their thematic emphasis in the 2024 Samaru community theatre project in Zaria, Kaduna State. Although, several studies focuses on popular music in criticizing government or leadership towards social transformation, this study centres on the metaphoric songs that condemns community maladjustment and raises campaigns for social development through community members. Through the concept of synchronism as a theoretical footing for the work, this study deploys a qualitative methodology which analyses the lyrical content of songs that addresses social ills in the Samaru community. Thus, the study reveals the synergic effect that existed between students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Samaru Community members in the songs creation, and presentation during the Samaru project performance addressing social ills and crusading for an enabling environment for community development. This synergetic approach of addressing community problems and proffering solution for social development is productive and aptly triggers lasting impression in the community. Therefore, the study recommends for the sustenance of such approach for quick response to curbing societal maladjustment for the overall development of the community.

Keywords: Music, Songs, Social Criticism, Community Development, Samaru Project.

Introduction

“In today's world, everyone shouts for statue of liberty, no one cares for statue of responsibility”
Frankl, Viktor.

Development issues are of global phenomena and are consequential to human lives expectancy on earth. The adequate provision of basic social amenities like water, clothing, shelter, health facilities, provision of jobs and the rate of poverty and the social wellbeing of the people are indicators of a developed nation. Thus, it determines the quality and life span of humans on planet earth. Discourse on development has become a generic issue in the global south where majority of the populace are deprived of basic social amenities compare to the west where development spring forth daily. Infrastructural development makes life easier in the west and attractive to others in the global south, promoting undue migration and loss of enormous resources: financial, human, intellectual among others.

The continuous mass exodus of professionals across various fields like medical, nursing, academic, Information Technologist, among others to the west for better livelihood is a thing of great concern. This has adverse effect to the national economy and needs great attention. Away from the old believe that

development exclusively lays on the shoulders of government, the present realities is that individual and communities must cooperate and treat core developmental issues that affect them. This could be a borrowed leave of the popular American aphorism “do not think of what America can do for you, think of what you can do for America”. Thus, this communal approach to developmental issues which is cultural, led to the concept of Samaru Project (Community Theatre); the bedrock of Theatre for Development (TfD), emanating as a panacea and succor to the people and nation towards addressing social issues that affect them.

Therefore, Theatre for Development (TFD) is a participatory strategy and effective research instrument that involves using theatrical and dramatic approaches to get people brainstorming critically about social challenges in their communities (Ihidero, 2019). TfD strives in the deployment of local idiolect to sue for community participation and people empowerment in development process (Daniel & Bappa, 2004; Eskamp, 2006; Ihidero, 2019). This enables the marginalized members of the community to be involved through theatrical and dialogical process in raising awareness on socio-political issues, building up social cohesion, and stimulating the participation, awareness and organizational strength of groups and communities.

To stimulate the people's interest and engage them effectively in this participatory developmental activity, TfD utilizes various instruments of games, songs, music, dance, and drama, which is what Oga Steve Abah (2003) conceptualized as 'perforaltics'. Abah defines perforaltics as 'the use of oral and gestural art forms of the people' in discussing their socio-political realities. These artistic and humanistic elements easily create connect between the facilitators and the community participants leading to community development. Community development is seen as “a process where community members take collective action on issues that are important to them. This collective action might be done with or without the support of the community development professionals or agencies”(https://aifs.gov.au). It is a process whereby community members come together to take collective action and generate solution to common problems through the use of dramatization, singing and dancing, chanting or poem recitation. In this regards, the role of a theatre practitioner is simply that of a facilitator who systematically manages the relationship ensuring that there is a fair participation of the community people throughout the process.

This work therefore, examines and analyses the deployment of songs to address socio-critical developmental issues in Samaru community theatre, in Zaria, Nigeria with the hope to engineering transformational spirit among the inhabitant of the society. The Samaru Project is a foundational experimentation of doing theatre for and with the community people for the purpose of development. Today, it is a strand of TfD deployed by the Ahmadu Bello University's Theatre and Performing Arts Department as an academic course offered by the 200 level to address community development issues within Samaru Community, a Sub-hub community around the university environment.

This course/project has a long time success history of about three decades. The essence of the community performance include; to groom students on the use of theatre for community development and social investigation; to make them realize that the grassroots communities have the ability to appreciate theatre performance and; to appropriate the dynamism of theatre as a people's weapon. Initially, the Samaru Project is done by sending students to carryout research about the social reality of the people, develop an improvised play and songs within the school premises and thereafter take the performance to the community but, in the 2024 edition, we had a unique experience as we were able to get the community people to participate in the scenario building and the eventual performance in the Samaru communities. It was unique because for the first time, we were able to document the increased and active participation of the community people throughout the process of the project from research to dress and technical rehearsal and performance.

The Samaru community theatre Project utilizes songs as an instrument to criticize predominant community vices that hinders social development. These songs were created alongside with the community members as co-composers and performed as well with them. Thus, it aids promoting the very participation in community theatre praxis, the idiolect that holds TfD. The songs created however serve as complements to the eventual messages embedded in the community drama. They were used to criticize salient social vices that are of great concern to the Samaru communities and its environs so as to witness social change. Indeed, the occurrence of social change will usher in social development. This is veritable because, music is an inherent part of every society. Waterman Notting on the musical life in southwestern yoruba Nigeria agrees that “the connection between music and society is so strong that many of the social codes are built and resolved from music” (Waterman in Spencer-Espinosa2022:61)

Song and Development

Social and infrastructural developments are weaved around human creativity and innovation. Humans are the driving force of social and industrial development. Even with the advent of artificial development, where machines works without human assistance, it is human's innovation that birthed such technologies. While some development can thrive by individual effort, certain development, especially such that pertains to community engagement, rely on collaborative efforts. While it is easier to work alone, pulling a whole human force for a concerted cause often proves difficult. One instrument that naturally pulls/attracts people to each other is music. Its magnetic power has been proven as a prominent force in establishing relationship among people (Miranda, 2012). Beyond mere establishing of relationship, as a “social lubricant” (Miranda, 2012:7), it creates a social bond among humans especially young people who share common taste and personality.

Isherwood notes the astonishing influence of music influencing human life in divers ways, places and spaces has landmark effects both in the micro and macro areas of the society (2018, p.23). By that, music especially its lyrical content, has tremendous psychological impact on its listeners as well as its creator. Robinwitch (2020:4) observed that “Music is often practiced as a social activity involving several individuals who collaborate in order to create music together”. This celebrated collaborative effort in music creation, does not only promote wider creative inputs but also stimulates the actual communal spirit needed in social transformation. This shows why younger folks spend a lot of time and money in music listening, due to the affective bond and pleasure experienced (Miranda, 2012). Thus, we can see in diverse activities like sports, games, festival, party, clubs, concerts, and other setting.

Again, it is worthy of note that the diverse ubiquitous presence of music occupying diverse spaces in the society creates job opportunities for people. People pay musicians to perform in various social events like birthday party, wedding party, naming ceremony, house warming, graduation party, even in concert shows. More so, in the northern part of Nigerian, we see the relevant of music in aiki gaya (team farming activities) which advance socio-economic development by promoting food security. Here, the musician plays the music (drumming) and singing inclusive, motivating the manoma (farmers) in a healthy competitive team farming. This motivation from the affective sound arouses their spirit to cultivate a large parcel of land within shorter time. On the global stage, the economic viability of music has contributed enormously to national gross domestic product of every nation. Aside taxes paid from sales of their record and proceeds from sales tickets of concert hall, musicians' lofty donations to community projects, aids community development.

Beyond the dependence on global musicians in community transformation, is the concept of community music making. This community music making that is operational in every nuclear society plays significant role in community development. To Cates (2020:93), Community-based music ensembles

play an important role in the social fabric of cities and towns around the world (Cates, 2020), as they reflect and project the "...identities, traditions, values, beliefs, aspirations, and social interactions" (Bartleet & Higgins, 2018, p. 2). It is arguable though that even with through adequate research, no one can actually represent issues of a community better than the community members. One of the essentialities of community music as observed by Schippers (2018) is for intervention. That is to identify all sorts of shortcomings and respond to them. This will position music and a moral regulator and advocator in the society. This very aspect forms the nucleus of this paper.

Theoretical Conception

This study adopts "Synchronism" as its theoretical footing. This theory was propounded by the Carl Jung, a Swiss psychoanalyst and founder of analytical psychology in the 1920s. Synchronism as a theory explains the system of harmonious blending of two independent activities/ things to the same pattern. A host of scholars also contribute to this concept and advances it in other related field. In their view, synchronization is a strong mechanism that links music and social behaviour in the society (Rabinowitch and Meltzoff, 2017; Tunc, Genc, and Cohen, 2016, 2018; Rabinowitch and Knafo-Noam, 2015). This, they arrived at after evaluating the life styles of pupil from ages 4-8 in musical activities that ranges from synchronized tapping and swinging of hands. The work thrives on the concept of synchronization as no truer development can spring without synchronism of thoughts and ideas from the minds of the people. As the aphorism goes, "it takes two to tangle", again two cannot work together except with mutual agreement (Amos 3:3). Thus, there is synchronism both in songs composition and dramatic actions to address critical social ills also communicate social development issues. Again, both the composition of songs and the creation of dramatic story were enabled through the synchronic activities of both the students and community members for long lasting impression in the community. The idea of incorporating community members in these acts is to stimulate a lasting effect of the critical nature of the issues addressed and enable them be part of the solution. Hence, by so doing, when the actors from the gown return to their educational environment, the actors of the town persevere in their community development.

Song and Social Criticism

In Africa, music (songs/instrumental) is the life wire of activities in every culture. There are songs for works (motivational), recreational songs (excitement), rite of passage (inspiring), marriage songs (joyful tune), commemoration of birth (joyful tune), burial songs (dirge), songs of praise and songs of scandals (Ndubuisi Nwafor-Ejelinma, 2001). While in African society, the song of praise eulogizes the royalties, people of substance and valour, the illustrious sons and daughters who have contributed meaningful development in the society, the song of scandal refute, mock, and satirize people of social misdemeanour in the society.

This culture is not only restricted to the Nigerian society but across culture in Africa as In Sudan for instance, among the Dinka and Shilluka People, songs of scandal is instrumental as a social control and inhibitor of immorality (Nwafor-Ejelinma, 2001). Furtherance to this, he explicates themes that reflect songs of scandals among African society thus:

There are songs to ridicule and scandalize irresponsible fathers and husbands, wayward and unfaithful women, quarrelsome couples, exploitative and fraudulent craftsmen, incompetent and unskilled workers, the disobedient child and bed-wetter. The songs are continuously designed to effect some amount of social control and castigate deviants (Nwafor-Ejelinma, 2001:P.52).

The Nigerian popular music scene also has a long historical strand of social criticism. Aside Fela and Majek Fashek as notably celebrated social critic in Nigerian popular musical landscape, there are a host of other popular musicians who successfully criticize social maladjustment through their musical artistry. People like Sunny Okoson, Daddy Shokey, Idris Aldulkarin, African China, Falz, Asa, and a host of others. However, Fela remains the king of social criticism as his music seems to solely criticize the activities of the Nigerian Government. (Olaniyan, 2004). Some of the lyrics in his music as observed by Olaniyan that critically attached government recklessness are “Water No Get Enemy” (1975), “Zombi” (1977), “International Thief Thief” (1978), “Shuffering and Shmiling” (1978), “Yellow Fever” (1971) just to mention a few. In fact, there is hardly any of Fela's music that does not criticize one social ill or the other. The gusto of his creative nonviolence attack on people, institution, society and government is grossly overwhelming. No wonder, Ewata accorded him a “trenchant social critic” (2015:9), and so he is among others Nigerian even African popular musicians. Throughout his life time, he invested his creativity seen in his AfroBeat compositions mocking the elite African culture that birthed him and, in some important respects, laid the foundations for his art” (Waterman, 1998). Well, his focus on the elite class, especially Government of his days was to crusade for social justice and development. Thus, Fela was the most popular, most provocative and the most monitored African musician of international repute in Africa (Olaniyan, 2004).

The idea of criticism goes beyond streamlining it solely as a tool for checkmating government policies and decisions. It also thrives at educating or informing the masses about governmental activities. Governmental activities amount to only a fragment of a whole activity in every community and if so, then, the art of criticism should be given a wider perspective. Hence, Hornby (2000:p.277) sees it as “the art of expressing disapproval of something and opinions about their faults or bad qualities”. This is with the aim of offering corrective and not retributive measure for the betterment and progress of the society (Okafor, 2004; Osofu, 2002).

Social development is not only tied to criticism of social vices but by also eulogizing certain values and ideals in the society. Several global innovations that shape modern landmark development passed through certain critical criticism of the ideas, process and people in place. Since the art of criticism subject creative ideas or processes for critical evaluation, then, it should be embraced by all who desire to be better. Popular music thrives around this scope but not just by mere criticism of ills but also, by persuading people towards certain attitudinal change in the society. Serge Denisoff classify such songs as "song of persuasion" (n.d, p.3) and believes their structure places emphasis more on the lyrical content stimulating the intellectual reasoning of the listeners. Such songs are didactic in nature appealing to the minds, pricking the conscience and eliciting emotive remorsefulness towards rightful deeds.

While the vast majority of popular Nigerian music of social criticism motif focuses on government or the elitists' class, the vast majority of songs analyzed in this work, criticizes the social infringements that endangers the development among the people of Samaru community, a semi-urban or rural sub-hub.

Research Methodology

This research uses a qualitative methodology which analyses the lyrical content of songs addressing social aspect of the Samaru community. The description of the songs in this study focuses on the social problems that predominant the community. The description of some songs here criticizes these social vices as reflected in the song analysis while some other songs are didactic in nature, teaching morals and calling for collaborative efforts to transform the society.

Analysis of Songs Used in the Samaru Project

A large volume of songs were utilized in this community project. Most of the songs were co-created by the students and the community participants in the project. The performance of the songs also was a collaborative effort. The intentionality of this collective musical experience is to synchronize the minds first and enable the messages contains in the songs last longer in the heart of community members even after the conclusion of the project. Some of the songs that reflect on themes of social criticism are:

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| 1. Yakamata Mu Daina | It is high time we stopped. |
| Yakamata mu kawar sata | It is high time we stopped the stealing habits. |
| Yakamata mu daina chin bashi | It is high time we stopped a life of credit. |

This is a simple structured song with just two phrases sung repetitively. The aim of repetition is to drive home the message, stamped in the people's heart to desist from stealing because such act comes with terrible repercussion. Stealing is one of the predominant social vices in Samaru community where miscreants gang up and steal from students and community members around.

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| 2. Tunda kin mai bakin ki ya zama reza | Since your mouth has become very sharp |
| Wannan reza naki sai kawo maki damuwa | Your sharp mouth will bring problem to you |
| Wannan reza naki shi sai yanka maki wuya | Your sharp mouth will destroy you |

The song depicts the poor communication styles/mood that several people pride on despite its destructivity. Poor communication is one of the causes of social friction breeding violence. Efficient communication strives on effective listening skills. Thus, the song cautions on ineffective communication styles and a need to build on active and efficient communication skill. Effective communication demand first cautious speech, deploying the right vocal tone, calmness and triggering the right emotionality. In Proverb 15:1, the wise man says “a soft speech quenches a fire...” “A gentle answer quiets anger, but a harsh one stir it up”. Aside the act of soft spoken communication, having a listening hear is paramount for effective communication and peaceful co-existence.

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| 3. Lungu lungu an san su | Every corner they are known |
| Kororo kororo an san su | In narrow roads they are known |
| Y'an iska duk sune | Rascality is their identity |
| Shaye shaye duk sune | indulging in drunkenness |
| Sache sache duk sune | and in perpetual stealing |
| Sholi sholi duk sune | Smoking has taken over their life |

This particular sarcastic song criticizes all strands of rascality exhibited in various youthful exuberances like: drunkenness, smoking, rape, stealing, gangsters, and others. Presented in a presto tempo of a quadruple metre and binary form, this song of social criticism, aims to elicit the emotion of shame, and guilt to forewarn perpetrators of such social delinquencies, by name shaming and mocking them to desist from such acts and embrace a better healthier lifestyle. This is one of the variant of the songs because the Samaru community is highly polluted with miscreants who take advantage of both students and community members who walk lonely by the path at night.

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| 4. Chacha Allah wandan ki chacha | God forbids gambling |
| Chacha ba mu kara yin ki | We will never gamble again |

This brief song harbours the theme of discipline. Discipline is a springboard to success in life. Just as exemplified in the field of arts and athlete, discipline is needed for guaranteed success in human endeavours. The youth of the Samaru community are being cautioned on the need to be discipline and focused midst social distractions. With what they have handy: skill and talents, they can nurture it with

discipline and trade it for success. Maturity in life is tied to discipline. When citizens are not disciplined, destruction is inevitable. Self-control is an inner struggle prone among youth. To overcome social/peer pressure, one must be highly disciplined. In essence, this short song teaches youths on the power to be self-disciplined and say no to drug abuse and gambling; a social menace in northern part of the society.

Song and Development

Development is a progression of intended improved social system for environmental and human advancement. The beauty of life is tied to social, economic, political and environmental development. Social development can spring forth either from the innate manifestation of man or shaped by social structure that governs the environment. Thus, the attitude of greatness and improved social development can be cultivated and instilled in human. However, it is easier to achieve this from the tender age than at adulthood. Irrespective though of the level of introducing developmental attributes in humans for social transformation, it is indispensable to communicate these and trigger the needed ideas in humans. One strong medium of community communication is through songs.

Songs play tremendous role in the Samaru community project addressing cogent developmental issues. These arrays of songs that narrate issues of social development for community progress were composed by the students following the outcome of research carried out from the community. The motifs of their songs were derived from the predominant themes reflected in their performance. A vast majority of these songs adopts a common African characteristic structure of call and response making it simpler for learning and retention. While the community members were not part of the composition development of the songs, their active participation in the rehearsal process make couple with the fact that the song are all in the native dialect of the people enable easy comprehension and communication. Aside that is also aids the sustainability of the message imbedded in them. Examples of such songs are:

1. Teamwork Song:

Ku Zo Mu Hadda Kai Mu	Come, let us team together
Kuzo mu hadda kan mu	Come, let us collaborate
Mu gyara kasan mu	and fix our nation
Kuzzo mu hadda kan mu	come let's work together
Mu gyara zukanta mu	and repair our hears
Kuzo mu hadda kai mu	come let's join work together
Mu gyara muhalan mu	and fix our home
Domin dukan mu fad at muke	for we are one
Ko kai bayerebe	even if you are from the West
Ko kai Igbo ne	even if you are from the east
Ko kai Bahausha ne	even if you come from the north
Mu rungume juna	let's love one another.

This song has the motif of Team Spirit which is indispensable for national development. By extension of mentioning the certain geographical region of Nigeria, it represents the need for the whole nation to imbibe the spirit of togetherness. This can only be achieved through love for one another. It is true love for the land which transcends regional affiliation that can promotes truer nationalism. The impact of collaborative efforts has great geometrical progression in achieving great feat in productivity. The strength of a citizen never be equated with that of two or more citizens of great competence.

KOWAYABI TARBIYA

Kowaya bi tarbiya	everyone should follow good morals
Yara ku bi tarbiya	Children should follow good morals
Manya ku bi tarbiya	Elders should follow good morals
Inba haka bas a mu gan sakanmako	If not we will face the consequences
Ni ma inbi tarbiya	I should also follow good morals

Ke ma ki bi tarbiya	You too should follow good morals
Kaima ka bi tarbiya	Men should follow good morals
In bah aka basamu gan sakamako	If not we shall all face the consequences

The song strongly campaigns for good morals among everyone, big or small, men or women, else we face the consequences. Social decadence is as a result of permissive bad moral life style in the society.

MAI BARCIYA FARKA N A SAUNE YA ZABURA

Mai barci farka na saune ya zabura	Let the sleepers awake, let the idle sit up (be at alert)
Mai tafiya dan Allah ka saurara mana	Let Travelers ponders...
Kai saurara man aka jawabi zamuyi	Pay attention we have a message to give
Mu ji farkon jawabi mu sauna lafiya	Let's pay attention to this message an live in
peace	
Mu sauna lafiya ya fada basaigumi	Let's shed the hatchets and live in peace,
Mu yan ABU munei maku salama	ABU students brings greetings to you, shalom!
Munei maku salama jalayeimana sadua	We say farewell and hope to meet again.

The specificity of this song hinges on peace-building for national development. Peace remains consequential element for societal development. Peace is synonymous to building while war is destruction. Through the song, the principles of Positivism are instilled in their heart. The theme of peace-building is a global call due to the malaises of strife, jealousy and triggers animosity even resulting to war. Peace remains a priceless virtue and highly esteemed in this musical communication to the Samuru community people. Creatively, there is an interlaced of this song to the previous, themed on team work for creative interconnectivity to the audience addressing one of the fundamental issues among them.

The structure of the song is intentionally in simplistic binary form; stylistically for communal singing that can triumph extemporarily singing. To communicate musical messages easily to the audience, active participation is desired. Amplification of musical sounds from instrumentation creates great affects; stimulate participants' participation and recapitulate of the scenes even after the play/ event. Although, African music incorporates and appreciates eurhythmics, it opens way to for audience engagement and participation. So, the audience seizes to be a spectator and is incorporated into the order of co-performers. The system is dexterous because the best way to make people to change is to transport them to the change agent/crusader.

Through musical performance of the audience friendly song, it necessitated the capacity to transform them from mere observers waiting for help or social developers to empowering them as the change agent. When we become a part of addressing key developmental issues in our society, we can actually transform our society with positivity.

As little though as it sounds, each of us has the capacity to engineer little change wherever we live. While it is government's responsibility to engineer developmental plans across the various socio-political sector of the land, mere leaving that enormous task to government would limit development greatly. However, little efforts from great landscape easily produce monumental effect than total dependence on a mighty figure to change the land. Another transforming grace one receive and is incorporated in participating in social transforming activities in our immediate environment is expanding our capacity for greater change. Every society depends on positive change maker and this song has that potential of recreating and reawaking the spirit of positive change in the audience.

Conclusion

Songs have potent effect on audiences especially when they participate in the singing. They touch the human memory and resounds through their mind even in their subconscious state long after the performance has been done. Communicating social criticism and developmental issues through Samaru community theatre project form in 2024, create a different dynamic approach. The manifestation of this goes beyond the participants' engagement but the underlying messages craftily portrayed in the various songs. Issues of crime, social crisis and immoral decadences that constantly multiply in the society needs urgent attention from every sector. Through adequate synchronic efforts of the students and Samaru community members, the social ills that bedevil the community and hinder social development were addressed with the hope of sustainability from the community members. The students of Theatre and Performing Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, haven engaged in this community project of transformation via artistic display, have been knitted into the cult of social transformation campaign, a thing that would not only ring a lasting bell in their sub-conscious mind, but would definitely produce several social change agent in the nearest future. The incorporation of the community member in all these production process will aid sustenance of the aim of the project for a long lasting effect.

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